Preplan Analysis
For the
Kobuk Seward Peninsula Resource Management Plan
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Bureau of Land Management
Northern Field Office
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I. Introduction

Beginning in FY04, The Northern Field Office (NFO) of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Plan (KSP RMP) to provide a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating uses of the public lands and resources within the Northwest portion of the NFO. Currently, the Northwest Management Framework Plan (MFP) completed in 1983 guides the use of these lands. The MFP has not been maintained, amended, or revised. A new Resource Management Plan (RMP) is necessary to comply with Appendix C of the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), and to address any new issues that evolved since the MFP was approved. The RMP will resolve resource management issues not adequately addressed by the MFP and provide direction for site-specific activity planning and implementation of specific tasks in the future. Ultimately, a new RMP will supersede the existing Northwest MFP.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, provides the authority for the Bureau of Land Management land use planning on public lands. In particular, Sec. 202 (a) requires the Secretary of the Interior, with public involvement, to develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans. Implementing regulations are contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, 43 CFR 1610. BLM Manual, 1601 Land Use Planning, and the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), provide procedures and guidance for the planning process.

II. Planning Area Description

The Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area encompasses approximately 13 million acres of BLM-administered lands in the Northern Field Office in northwestern Alaska (Planning Area Map 1). The Planning Area encompasses the area from Point Lay, south to the Norton Sound, and from the Bering and Chukchi seas east to the upper Kobuk River. It includes the Seward Peninsula, east to the Nulato Hills and the boundary of the Central Yukon Planning Area. It generally encompasses the area included in the NW Arctic Borough, the northern portion of the Bering Straits Region, and the western edge of the North Slope Borough. There are approximately 22 communities within the area. The Planning Area is mostly roadless except for about 200 miles of road on the Seward Peninsula, originating in Nome, and roads within villages. The Planning Area includes lands administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), as well as lands conveyed to the State, Native corporations, or other private landowners. Also it includes lands selected, but not yet conveyed, to the State of Alaska and Native Corporations. Table 1 shows the ownership and land status within the Planning Area.

The NFO is organized into geographic management units. The Planning Area is based upon the area covered by the Northwest MFP (all BLM lands in Northwest Alaska excluding the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska). This area encompasses the Northwest Geographic Area managed by the Northwest Team (AK-025) and the western edge of the Arctic Geographic Area managed by the Arctic Team (AK-023).

Table 1: Land Status Within the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area

Land Category	Subtotal Acres	Total Acres
BLM Administered Lands		
BLM Public Lands	4,990,000	
State Selected (BLM)	3,568,000	
AK Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Selected (BLM)	4,419,000	
Both State & ANCSA Selected	109,000	
Total BLM		12,977,000
National Park Service Lands		4,222,000
Fish and Wildlife Service Lands		2,978,000
State of Alaska Lands		5,635,000
Native (ANCSA) Lands		5,596,000
Private		233,000
Military		20,000
Total Lands Within Planning Area		31,661,000

Note: All acreage figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 acres to account for future updates to improve land status data. No Warranty is made by BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data. For official land status and boundary information, refer to cadastral survey plats, master title plats, and land status case-files.

III. Anticipated Issues and Management Concerns

The following issue topics and management concerns will be the focus of the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP. These will be refined and other issues possibly developed during public participation.

A. ISSUE 1: HOW WILL PEOPLE'S USES AND ACTIVITIES BE MANAGED?

Lands within the Planning Area are subject to many uses including recreation, right-of-ways, communication sites, mineral entry and development, subsistence hunting and gathering, and reindeer grazing. The lack of road access makes resources relatively difficult or expensive to access for those living outside the Planning Area. Both Nome and Kotzebue are served by daily commercial airlines. From Nome, there are about 200 miles of public roads accessing the southwestern part of the Seward Peninsula. From Kotzebue, air charters are available to remote sites. Commercial air service is available to all of the villages from either Nome or Kotzebue. The Planning Area provides opportunities for primitive outdoor recreation. BLM has only two developed recreational facilities, the Salmon Lake Campground and the Safety Sound Wayside. The Iditarod National Historic Trail crosses the Planning Area and ends in Nome. Recreational use, particularly sport hunting by non-local residents is increasing in some areas. Concerns are being raised about the impacts, both individually and cumulatively, of these activities on wildlife as well as on traditional subsistence uses. Management of these activities is crucial to sustaining local economies and resources important to the subsistence lifestyle.

1. Private and commercial recreation use

The Kobuk/Seward Peninsula Planning Area provides a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. The lack of roads influences how this area is used and how it might be developed. With the exception of some areas around Nome, the vast majority of this area is accessible only by boat, airplane, snowmachine, and off highway vehicles (OHV). It is the remote wilderness character of the area that predicates what recreational use will occur.

Recreational uses, demands, and impacts are increasing. New technologies are making it easier for visitors to access areas that have not traditionally seen much use. OHV use is increasing and mostly unmanaged, resulting in resource impacts to vegetation, cultural resources, soil and water, and wildlife. Types of impacts include erosion, damage to permafrost, and harassment of wildlife. Applications for commercial recreational activities such as guided fishing and hunting are on the increase. Concerns are being raised about the impacts of these activities on wildlife and traditional subsistence uses.

- *What range of recreational opportunities should be provided to meet the wide variety of public demands?*
- *Where could the designation of Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) maintain or increase these opportunities?*
- *What methods and criteria could be used to determine the appropriate levels for all types of private recreational use including air taxi use and commercial recreation use in the Planning Area?*
- *What opportunities exist for interpretation and education?*
- *What are the impacts of increased recreational use on the quality of fish and wildlife habitat?*
- *How can we best manage or balance recreational and subsistence uses of the resource?*
- *What is the economic value of recreational resources?*

2. Off-Highway Vehicle Management

Use of motorized off-road vehicles is increasing throughout the Planning Area and is a concern for managers, interest groups, and the general public. All terrain vehicles (ATVs) including 4-wheelers, Argos, tracked vehicles, and airboats, are used recreationally, but in Alaska the predominant use is for hunting and fishing access. Snowmachine use to access hunting areas has also increased. Using newer and more powerful machines, riders have expanded use to areas that were not accessible to motorized vehicles before. Section 811 of ANILCA allows reasonable access to subsistence resources on the public lands. It states “the Secretary shall permit on the public lands appropriate use for subsistence purposes of snowmobiles, motorboats, and other means of surface transportation traditionally employed for such purposes.” Transportation traditionally employed must be defined.

BLM has not restricted OHV travel in the Planning Area. Closures may be appropriate where OHV use is or will cause adverse effect upon soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, historical resources, threatened or endangered species, wilderness suitability, other authorized uses, or other resources. OHV designations of "open", "limited" or "closed" are required for public land (43 CFR 8342.1).

- *How will the existing condition of OHV trails be determined and what criteria will be used to determine if OHV use is causing adverse effects to Planning Area resources, such as soil, water, and vegetation?*
- *What are the effects of increased OHV use on animal distribution, habitat quality, and availability of refuge areas?*
- *Are there long term cumulative impacts to subsistence hunting and fishing from OHV use?*
- *What should the OHV designation be for different areas within the Kobuk/Seward Peninsula Planning Area (open, limited, or closed)?*

3. Mineral and Energy Resources

For the past two mining seasons there have been no active mining, production or exploration on public lands for locatable minerals, marking the end of a steady decline in the number of active mining operations on BLM administered lands in Northwestern Alaska and the Seward Peninsula. There are three factors that have worked to this end; conveyance of lands selected by the State of Alaska and the Native Corporations and entitled to them by the Alaska native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA), changes in federal mining regulations (43 CFR 3809) and commodity market fluctuations, and the increasing costs of mining. The largest contributing factor is that of the changing ownership of lands from federal to State and private (Native Corporations). Recognizing their economic potential, the State of Alaska and the Native Corporations deliberately selected lands with known and prospectively high mineral potential. During the 1980's there were on the order of 40 active mining operations (mostly placer) regulated by federal regulations but all were located on selected lands. By the early 1990's title to these selections were conveyed out of federal jurisdiction.

Mineral materials are found in quantity and quality on private and State lands in the Planning Area. Interest in industrial minerals (riprap) from Bering Straits Native Corporation's quarry at Cape Nome remains high. The quality of the product makes it in demand around Alaska's Bering Sea coastal villages and inland, river accessible villages for construction projects. The quality and accessibility make this tidewater deposit potentially viable in the Pacific Rim market. Sand and gravel needs still exceed supply in the Kotzebue region and pits are opened along shorelines with barge access to supply materials for housing, airport and other infrastructure projects.

Portions of the Planning Area are closed to from mineral location and leasing by various ANCSA withdrawals. This has limited mineral exploration and development to pre-existing mining claims and leases on most BLM administered lands. The ID Team will review withdrawals to determine if any changes to status are warranted. Abandoned

placer mining operations remain in various drainages. The ID Team will define a process for reviewing abandoned mine sites for reclamation. The Seward 1008 Study and Decision Record for the Planning area was completed in 1983. The Record of Decision includes decisions on mineral leasing, mineral location, and FLPMA sales and leases.

Existence of sedimentary basins may indicate presence of oil and gas. The Kobuk/Seward planning area contains two onshore oil and gas basins, the Colville and Selawik Basins. There are no known reserves of oil and gas within the planning area, however the US Geological Survey (USGS) reported that the potential for gas in the western part of the Colville Basin, a portion of which lies within the planning boundary, is good to excellent. Two wells have been drilled in the Selawik Basin: Cape Espenberg 1 and Nimiuk Point 1. Neither of these wells contained oil. Likewise, USGS did not identify plays or assess the resource within the Selawik Basin, however they did state that biogenic gas might be present. Coal is abundant in the Kobuk/Seward planning area. Coalbed methane may be a resource that the local villages utilize as a cheaper, local energy alternative to shipping in diesel fuel. The BLM and Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys have entered into an MOU to study the feasibility of coalbed methane as a rural energy alternative to diesel. Coal samples from the region were taken this summer and are being analyzed. One drawback to the development of coalbed methane within the Planning Area, even for local use, is the lack of infrastructure. The North Slope and Cook Inlet regions will continue to be the dominant areas of exploration and development in Alaska due to not only the infrastructure that is already in place, but also to the proven reserves of both areas. Unless there is a request for local use, the potential for lease sales occurring under this plan is low.

New oil and gas leases cannot be issued for unleased federal lands until the lands have been considered in the context of an EIS level document fully disclosing the anticipated impacts. Ninth Circuit Court decisions require that lease issuance be considered a commitment of resources, therefore impacts through development must be considered in the decision to lease. The current Northwest Management Framework Plan does not contain an EIS for oil and gas development.

- *What is the marketability of mineral materials in the Planning Area?*
- *What lands are currently withdrawn from mineral entry and location?*
- *What criteria should be used in determining the metallic and non-metallic locatable mineral potential of these withdrawn lands?*
- *Are there energy minerals within the Planning Area that could be made available for lease?*

4. Land Tenure Adjustments

Land tenure adjustments (acquisitions, sales and exchanges) are the mechanism by which BLM will refine its land base to fulfill its mission and to meet the economic and social needs of residents. Land conveyances to the State of Alaska and Native Corporations have resulted in a mixed pattern of land ownership.

- *What lands might be available for disposal, acquisition, or exchange to consolidate land ownership patterns and facilitate good land management?*
- *What lands might be withdrawn for BLM administrative and recreation sites?*

5. Access

Access to public land is becoming more important as recreation and subsistence use increases. Section 17(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) provided for the reservation of easements across lands being conveyed to Native regional and village corporations primarily to provide access to public lands. In many cases, easements were reserved to provide legal rather than physical access, with no ground truthing prior to the conveyance. As a result, legal easements often are unusable for actual use. Approximately 128 miles of trail and 8 site easements in the Planning Area have been located and marked on the ground. These are most of the easements that are legally and physically usable and go to public land.

- *Is there a need for acquisition, termination, or re-location of 17(b) and other easements for access to public lands?*
- *What opportunities exist for cooperation and coordination with Native Corporations in 17(b) easement management?*

6. Grazing

Conflicts between domestic reindeer and caribou have occurred in Alaska from the first time reindeer herding operations overlapped with caribou ranges. In all cases, reindeer have been lost to migrating caribou herds. Herders have been put out of business or forced to avoid using areas when caribou are present. Today, the only remaining reindeer ranges administered by BLM are on the Seward and Baldwin peninsulas. Over the last two decades, the Western Arctic Caribou herd has expanded its winter range westward into the remaining traditional reindeer ranges and many of the herders have lost their reindeer. Due conflicts with caribou, some herders are interested in other types of livestock. The BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) requires that land use plans identify what lands are available for livestock grazing and the future anticipated permitted use.

- *Which lands should be open to livestock grazing?*
- *Should grazing by livestock other than reindeer be authorized?*
- *What is the economic value of the livestock industry?*

B. ISSUE 2: HOW DO WE PROTECT AND CONSERVE LANDS HAVING SPECIAL CRITICAL OR UNIQUE FEATURES OR RESOURCE VALUES?

1. River Protection

The federal government has been directed by congress to consider potential additions to the national wild and scenic rivers system during land use planning. During the planning process, we will also develop alternative strategies for protection of river-dependent

values. As all the rivers in the Planning Area are free-flowing, identifying rivers that are eligible pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires identifying outstandingly remarkable values. Through the public scoping process, the presence of outstandingly remarkable values will be identified. The Squirrel River was thoroughly evaluated as a potential addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system in the 1999 FEIS/Study. Congress is currently considering the recommendation for non-designation.

This RMP/EIS will decide on the *suitability* or non-suitability of rivers within the planning unit as additions to the national wild and scenic rivers system. Rivers that are found suitable may be recommended for designation by congress. In contrast to eligibility, which is based on a factual description of the existing situation, suitability is a decision based on weighing various elements through the planning process. Details on the process used to make suitability decisions are given below. The decision on suitability will be made after answering the following questions. Should the river's free-flowing character, water quality, outstanding river values be protected, or are one or more other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise? Would designation be the best method for protecting the river corridor? Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any nonfederal entities who may be partially responsible for implementing protective management?

- *Are there rivers in the Planning Area that are suitable for addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system, or are they better managed without designation?*

2. Iditarod National Historic Trail

The Iditarod National Historic Trail is one of the most significant draws of people and most well known landmarks of the Northwest area. The trail hosts several competitive events including the annual Iditarod (dogsled race), Iron Dog (snowmachine) race, and several other local dogsled and snowmachine races. In addition to competitive events, the well-traveled, well-marked, historic trail is used by many others, including snowmachiners, dog mushers, bicyclists, hikers, subsistence hunters, and skiers. Local residents use the trail for inter-village travel between Nome and Unalakleet. Use of the trail has been increasing over the past two decades and can be expected to continue to increase in the future. Although BLM manages only fragmented parcels of land along the trail route, BLM does provide cooperative management for the entire trail administered by the Anchorage Field Office. As lands are conveyed, 17b easements for the INHT are retained by BLM. Management goals and objectives are outlined in the Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan.

- *How will we ensure that the integrity of the Iditarod National Historic Trail is preserved on BLM managed lands?*

3. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) designation highlights areas where special management attention is needed to protect important resources or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards. Section 202 (c) (3) of FLPMA mandates that

BLM give priority to the designation and protection of ACECs in the development and revision of land use plans. ACECs must meet the relevance and importance criteria in 43 CFR 1610.7-2(b) and must require special management to: Protect the area and prevent irreparable damage to resources or natural systems; or protect life and promote safety in areas where natural hazards exist. Research Natural Areas (RNA) are established and maintained for the purpose of research and education because the land has one or more of the following characteristics: (1) A typical representation of a common plant or animal association; (2) an unusual plant or animal association; (3) a threatened or endangered plant or animal species; (4) a typical representation of common geologic, soil, or water features; or (5) outstanding or unusual geologic, soil, or water features (43 CFR 8223). Consistent with current policy, RNAs would be designated as a type of ACEC using the ACEC designation process (H-1601-1, Appendix C and BLM Manual 1613).

In the early to mid 1980s BLM contracted with Dr. Glenn Juday, then of the Institute of Northern Forestry, to evaluate sites in northwest Alaska for possible designation as Research Natural Areas (RNAs). Dr. Juday completed reports on four areas, including alternative boundaries for each. The four reports cover the following possible RNAs: Windy Cove, on the southern side of the Imuruk Basin; Mt. Osborn, in the Kigluaik Mountains; Camp Haven Gap, in the interior of the Seward Peninsula near the Tubutulik River; and Clear Creek Hot Springs, in the southeastern portion of the Seward Peninsula, also near the Tubutulik River. When Dr. Juday's reports were received in 1985, the decision was made to defer designation until a new RMP was written. The issue, then, is whether or not we should formally designate these areas as ACECs during the Kobuk/Seward Peninsula planning effort. At the same time, we should consider new information that might affect designation. For example, the identification of genetically distinct arctic char populations in some of the lakes in the Kigluaik Mountains may justify expanding the Mt. Osborn RNA to include these lakes.

There are three designated ACECs in the Central Yukon RMP, immediately adjacent to the KSP Planning Area: the Ungalik River Watershed ACEC, the Inglutalik River Watershed ACEC and the Shaktoolik River Watershed ACEC. These areas were designated to protect important salmon habitat within these watersheds but only include the portions of the watersheds that are within the Central Yukon area. This plan should consider possible designation of the remainder of these three watersheds as ACECs.

- *Should the Research Natural Areas proposed by Dr. Juday in 1985 be designated as ACECs? If so, which boundary options should be selected?*
- *Are there any other areas in the Planning Area that should be considered for ACEC designation?*

C. ISSUE 3: HOW WILL THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE PLANNING AREA BE MANAGED AND CONSERVED?

1. Soil, Water and Air

Due to the complex land status patterns near the villages and communities within the planning area, it is difficult to anticipate what issues related to soil, water, and air (SWA) may arise. Under ANCSA, villages were allowed to select from the core townships close to their villages with the regional corporations then frequently selecting lands around the villages. At the same time under the Statehood Act, the State of Alaska also selected lands close to major population centers such as Nome, as well as lands with mineral potential. Potential issues related to municipal water sources and degraded watersheds are known to exist on state and native lands near Nome. However, the extent of these problems on adjacent BLM lands is not known at this time. Most of the waters within the Planning Area are assumed to be category I, meeting standards for all uses. Management actions proposed as part of plan development may impact rivers within the Planning Area. The process of identifying management actions and the subsequent impacts will dictate whether or not there are SWA concerns related to the actions. While, recognizing the likelihood of SWA management concerns developing as part of scoping and planning, at this time, we are not aware of SWA issues that would drive plan development. The NFO anticipates that SWA issues would be identified through the scoping process and development of the MSA, and be further developed and addressed during the planning process. Requirements for SWA under Appendix C of the H-1601-1 will be met.

- *How will we ensure that requirements under the Clean Air Act are met on BLM managed lands?*
- *Are any watersheds in the Planning Area in need of special protection?*
- *How will we ensure that water quality requirements are met in waters on BLM lands?*

2. Vegetation

Vegetation provides food and cover for wildlife, plus scenic enjoyment and subsistence needs for people. Vegetation is a key ingredient in determining the health of public lands because it influences the quantity and quality of water produced from the watershed, and affects overland flows and soil movement, which can lead to erosion and loss of habitat. The landscape of the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area lies within the northern extension of boreal forest, and is part of a broad transition zone from forested terrain to treeless tundra. The Planning Area features a diverse mix of lowland and alpine tundra, abundant stands of tall, medium and low shrubs, ponded wetlands, white spruce woodland, black spruce bog, riparian stands of balsam poplar, and small scattered groves of paper birch or quaking aspen.

Wildland fire is possible in both tundra and forest. Among many other effects, wildfire reduces lichen cover and biomass, and in tundra plant communities tends to increase graminoid and shrub components. However multi-aged lichen stands provide diversity

and ecological stability. Lichen is an important element of winter forage for caribou and reindeer. The Planning Area includes important winter range for the Western Arctic Caribou herd. Permanent vegetation and fire effects-transects have been established in the Planning Area to monitor changes in the vegetation.

Human settlements in the Planning Area are mostly confined to small, scattered villages, with two larger towns (Nome and Kotzebue). However people do travel widely throughout the area mainly by snow machine, small boats, OHVs, small aircraft, and dog team. Important subsistence uses of vegetation include picking berries and greens, plus firewood and house log harvest. No weed inventory has been done in the Planning Area. Based on land ownership patterns, distance of BLM lands from population centers, the presence of a relatively pristine vegetative community, and lack of road access, we anticipate that noxious weeds are not an issue at this time. However, the potential exists for introduction and spread of noxious weeds and it should be addressed in the RMP.

Vegetation mapping for portions of the area is currently available, and additional areas will be mapped during 2003. Desired condition may be difficult to define in Alaska. Ecological Site inventory has not been completed for most of the Planning Area. The vegetation is not degraded except in a few localize areas. In most cases, desired condition for the Planning Area would be the potential natural community.

- *What are the desired conditions of the plant communities in the Planning Area?*
- *Recognizing that in most cases the desired condition for the Planning Area would be potential natural community, are there any management actions,(such as initiating or implementing reindeer grazing allotment management plans, excluding or prescribing fire, or granting firewood and house log permits) that might be used to achieve desired conditions in specific areas?*
- *How can best utilization be made of existing caribou winter range and fire-effects transects and how often should they be read?*
- *Are noxious weeds present, and if so, how will they be managed? How can further introductions be prevented?*

3. Cultural and Paleontological Resources

a) Cultural

Northwest Alaska contains remains of humanity's past dating as far back as about 10,000 years ago. Based primarily on the excavations at Onion Portage and on the beach ridge sequence at Cape Krusenstern, the basic cultural chronology of the area has been fairly well defined. However, because of the conveyance of lands to the state and to Native corporations, and because of the creation of several parks and refuges, there are few cultural resources of any age known to occur on BLM-managed lands. (At one point in the not-too-distant past, the statewide database of known sites contained only four entries for all the millions of acres of BLM-managed lands in northwest Alaska, and only one of these had been verified to exist on the ground.) Because of this lack of information about the resource, the Northwest MFP contained a recommendation for priorities for reconnaissance-level inventories to begin to

gather data on cultural resources in the area. These inventories were completed some years ago, providing information needed to plan management of known sites and to develop recommendations for new inventory. These are goals of the current plan. We should evaluate known sites and determine what opportunities exist for utilizing them for research, education, and public interpretation. At the same time, new direction has been developed regarding Traditional Cultural Properties, and we need to gather information on where and what such sites may be in the Planning Area.

- *What are the locations of known historic and prehistoric resources within the Planning Area?*
- *Where should more work be conducted to add to our knowledge of cultural resources in the Planning Area?*
- *What Traditional Cultural Properties exist within the Planning Area?*
- *What impacts to cultural resources can be anticipated from development activities such as mineral development, OHV designations, or other uses of the public lands?*
- *Are there any area-wide or site-specific use restrictions needed for cultural resources that might affect the location, timing, or method of development of other resources in the Planning Area?*
- *What opportunities exist for use of cultural resources for scientific, educational, and recreational uses?*
- *Where has previous cultural resource inventory been conducted in the Planning Area?*

b) Paleontological

There are limited known occurrences of paleontological materials from public lands in northwest Alaska. A few invertebrate specimens have been recovered from the Squirrel River basin, an even smaller number have been reported from the Solomon and Bendeleben USGS quadrangles in the eastern interior of the Seward Peninsula. A few Pleistocene vertebrate fossils are recorded from BLM-managed lands in and around the Kigluaik Mountains near Nome. The Northwest MFP did not address paleontological resources. This RMP will provide guidance for the program consistent with H-1601-1.

- *What are the locations of known paleontological resources within the Planning Area?*
- *Where should more work be conducted to add to our knowledge of paleontological resources in the Planning Area?*
- *Are there any area-wide or site-specific use restrictions needed for paleontological resources that might affect the location, timing, or method of development of other resources in the Planning Area?*
- *What opportunities exist to promote the scientific, educational, and recreational use of fossils?*

4. Visual Resources

Bureau policy requires Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes for public lands in the RMP Record of Decision. Also visual design considerations are required for all surface-disturbing projects occurring on public lands regardless of the size or potential visual impact of a project.

Many visitors are attracted to the visual qualities of the Planning Area. VRM is a tool to help minimize the impacts associated with development activities without unduly hindering development objectives. It is also important to understand that the VRM Contrast Rating Process, which is part of the VRM system, should not be viewed as a means to preclude development. But, rather as a design tool to assist management in the minimization of potential visual impacts. VRM was not address in the Northwest MFP. The document states "VRM classification system is of little use". The MFP is outdated and many changes have occurred since it was written.

- *How will the scenic quality of the landscape within the Kobuk –Seward Peninsula Planning Area be managed?*

5. Special Status Species

Special Status species include plants or animal that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), proposed for listing as threatened or endangered, listed as a candidate species, listed by the State of Alaska, or designated as sensitive by the BLM State Director. BLM has a legal mandate to conserve threatened and endangered species, and BLM's policy is to conserve all special status species to ensure that they do not require listing under the ESA (BLM Manual 6840). Handbook 1610-1 requires identification of strategies and decisions to conserve special status species. There are no known threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat on BLM administered lands within the Planning Area. In 2002, BLM Alaska developed a draft T&E and Sensitive Species list for vertebrates and plants. This list includes one mammal, one fish, 46 plant taxa, and more than 20 birds that may occur within the Planning Area.

Seven special status plant species are documented within the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area. Rare plant inventories have been conducted in limited portions of the Planning Area, but much of BLM-managed land remains botanically unexplored. Opportunistic collection of rare plants, or of plants outside their expected range has occurred during other BLM projects targeting wildlife habitat evaluation. Since 1995, BLM has been an active partner in a Conservation Agreement between FWS and USAF for the protection of Barneby's Milkvetch (*Oxytropis arctica* var. *barnebyana*), a BLM Sensitive Species.

From 1997-99, BLM Alaska cooperated with the University of Wisconsin in a study to determine if land-locked Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*) in the Kigluaik Mountain lakes north of Nome were genetically distinct from other char in the circumpolar region. These fish are genetically isolated and unique, and have evolved into two separate morphs, one

of which is unique to the species. In Crater Lake, a dwarf morph was found which displayed adult characteristics including full reproductive capabilities. Due to the cold water habitat, limited food supply, and short summer season, these fish are slow growing and susceptible to over-exploitation by recreational anglers. In April 2000, justification for listing these fish as a BLM Sensitive Species was submitted to the State Office in Anchorage. The State Director has yet to sign off on this listing, but fisheries management has proceeded in anticipation of this. In 2003, a new project was initiated to obtain population estimates of the char in the Kigluaik Mountain lakes. Future partnership with Trout Unlimited and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is a logical step towards funding research and protection of these unique fish.

- *What information will be needed to adequately assess special status plant species and botanical resources in support of permitting and monitoring activities for mineral development, recreation opportunities, etc.?*
- *What management actions will benefit special status plant species within the Planning Area?*
- *What management actions are needed to conserve special status animal species within the Planning Area?*
- *What management actions can benefit sensitive fish species within the Planning Area?*
- *How will sensitive fisheries be protected from overexploitation by recreational anglers?*

6. Wildlife

Handbook 1601-1 requires the identification of priority wildlife species, habitats, and actions or use restrictions needed to achieve desired population and habitat conditions. The Planning Area supports a wide variety of wildlife. Many of these species are important subsistence resources for residents of the area. Caribou are second in importance only to fish as a subsistence resource in western Alaska. The Planning Area encompasses insect-relief habitat, the primary winter range, and migration routes for the Western Arctic caribou herd (WACH). This herd is an extremely important subsistence resource for northwest Arctic villages. Facilitating migration, movement of insect-harassed animals, and maintaining sufficient winter range to support the herd is important to residents within the Planning Area. A cooperative management plan for the WACH was completed in March 2003. This plan was developed by the WAC Working Group, which includes representatives from communities and users from throughout the range of the herd. The plan focuses on long-term conservation of the herd and the ecosystem upon which it depends. Two reintroduced muskoxen populations are found in the Planning Area. Muskoxen are becoming more important as a subsistence resource. In some areas, local residents support continued expansion of muskoxen into suitable habitats. In other areas, they would like to see the muskoxen population stay at its current level. There is also high interest by non-local residents in maintaining populations of sufficient size to allow sport hunting. Moose populations in much of the Planning Area are currently declining. Moose is an important subsistence species, particularly when caribou are not present.

- *How will we maintain sufficient habitat to support harvestable populations of wildlife for both subsistence and recreational use?*
- *How will we ensure that important habitats for the WACH on BLM managed lands are conserved?*
- *What actions or use restrictions are needed to achieve desired population and habitat conditions for priority species?*

7. Fisheries

In 1999, the Governor of Alaska declared a salmon disaster for Norton Sound due to the lack of salmon returning to the seven rivers surrounding Nome. Although Chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*) are the principal species of concern due to their importance as a subsistence resource, Pink salmon (*O. gorbuscha*) and King salmon (*O. tshawytscha*) returns have also fallen off. This lack of fish near Nome has placed increased pressure on other salmon species in adjacent drainages, in particular, Coho salmon (*O. kisutch*) in the Fish River system, and Sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*) migrating through the Imuruk Basin/Pilgrim River to Salmon Lake and also migrating through the Sinuk River to Glacial Lake.

Near Kotzebue, chum salmon numbers are sufficient to allow both subsistence harvests and commercial fishing. Chum salmon produced in the rivers draining into Kotzebue Sound are larger than those produced in Norton Sound. This may be due to the Kotzebue chums spawning in spring-fed sloughs that may impart more temperature units to the fish over the course of the winter, thereby providing better growing conditions. Therefore, the principal fisheries concern for BLM lands in the Squirrel River drainage revolves around the protection of these important spawning areas. Increased use of ORV's at recreational hunting camps is a possible threat to these unique spawning locations. These vehicles need to be prevented from crossing sloughs utilized by the spawning salmon.

- *How will we protect migrating salmon in areas of increased fishing pressure?*
- *What data is required to identify critical salmon spawning and rearing areas?*
- *What is the extent of salmon production (spawning/rearing) in the Planning Area?*

8. Subsistence

For thousands of years, Alaska Natives relied on fish, wildlife and other wild resources for food, shelter, clothing, transportation, and trade. Today, many rural Alaskans continue to live off the land and waters, depending upon wild plants, fish and animals as reliable and economic sources of food. For many Alaskans, the ability to continue these subsistence activities is also an important part of their cultural heritage. Title VIII of ANILCA was designed to ensure continued access to subsistence resources on federal land. Preservation and availability of subsistence resources is an issue of extreme importance to residents of the Planning Area. Additional management concerns regarding subsistence are listed under Recreation, Wildlife and Fisheries.

- *How will we protect resources that are important to maintaining a subsistence lifestyle?*
- *What is the economic value of subsistence resources used?*

9. Fire Management

Wildland fire commonly occurs throughout the Planning Area. It provides one of the most significant mechanisms for changes in the landscape. Without fire, large areas of the landscape will become dominated by black or white spruce and old areas of lichens will lose their value as a food source for some animals. This plan will determine which areas would benefit from fire and which areas or resources may need protection from wildland fire in accordance with Handbook 1601-1, Appendix C. This plan will also examine the need for fuels manipulation to meet management objectives.

- *What management actions can be undertaken to address wildland fire?*
- *What resources need protection from wildland fire?*
- *What resources will benefit from fire?*
- *Are fuels management projects needed to meet vegetation or wildlife management objectives?*
- *Do any hazardous fuel conditions exist*?

IV. Preliminary Planning Criteria

Bureau of Land Management planning regulations (43CFR 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of resource management plans. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the development of the plan and determine how the planning team approaches the development of alternatives and, ultimately, selection of a preferred alternative. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other Federal, state and local agencies and governmental entities, and Native Corporations, analysis of information pertinent to the Planning Area, and professional judgment.

The following preliminary criteria were developed internally and will be presented to the public during scoping before being used in the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area EIS/ RMP process. Planning criteria may change as need indicates during the scoping process. The NFO Manager will approve final criteria.

- Opportunities for public participation will be encouraged throughout the RMP process.
- Valid existing rights will be recognized and protected.
- Subsistence uses and needs will be considered and adverse impacts minimized to the extent possible in accordance with ANILCA Sec. 810.
- The Planning Team will work cooperatively with the State of Alaska, Native corporations, municipal governments, other Federal agencies, interested groups, and individuals.

- Wildlife habitat management will be consistent with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) objectives and/or the Federal Subsistence Board requirements or mandates.
- The plan will be consistent with the mandates of FLPMA, NEPA, CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality), National Historic Preservation Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and other federal laws, regulations, and policies as required. The planning process will include an Environmental Impact Statement that will comply with National Environmental Policy Act standards.
- BLM will meet the requirements in Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).
- OHV designations for all public lands within the Planning Area will be completed in accordance with 43 CFR 8342.
- Areas proposed for ACEC designation will meet the criteria contained in 43 CFR 1610.7-2.
- Review and classification of waterways as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System will follow the criteria contained in 43 CFR 8351.
- The plan will address all lands within the Planning Area that are currently administered by BLM.
- The plan will be consistent with the Iditarod Historic Trail Management Plan.
- The Resources and Planning Branch (AK-931) developed Standards and Guidelines for Alaska. These are currently under review at the Washington Office. Approved standards will be incorporated into this plan.
- BLM will not do wilderness review during this planning process unless there is broad support for such review among State and Federal elected officials representing Alaska.
- BLM will characterize existing social and economic conditions and trends for local communities.
- BLM will characterize impacts to existing social and economic conditions and trends.
- BLM will incorporate Environmental Justice (EJ) considerations in land use planning alternatives to adequately respond to EJ issues and problems facing minority populations, low-income communities, and Tribes living near public lands, and using public land resources.
- BLM will determine if its proposed actions will adversely and disproportionately impact minority populations, low-income communities, and Tribes (Executive Order No. 12898, “Environmental Justice”).

V. Data and GIS Needs, Including Inventory

The NFO staff has identified data and GIS products needed to address resource and use issues, and develop and analyze impacts of plan alternatives. The Data Matrix in Appendix B summarizes these data needs and provides a cost estimate for collecting, analyzing and digitizing the data. In some cases, resource information available in the BLM Field Office will be used in formulating resource objectives and management actions. Also, data is available from the State of Alaska and other Federal agencies.

Compilation and analysis of land status data for the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) will be a major workload during FY04. Lands staff will need to collect and review land status, Native and State selections, withdrawals, access and easement information, etc. The GIS layer for land status is mapped only to the nearest square mile and we suspect it has many errors in it. Correction of the GIS layer will be time consuming and will require help from the Alaska State Office.

Much of this data needs to be updated, compiled, and put into digital format for use in the planning process and for development of alternatives and resource maps for the plan. GIS theme maps are the building blocks to quantify resources, create maps, and manipulate resources during alternative formulation. In order to meet planning deadlines, accelerated map preparation may have to occur and other work may take a lower priority. Additional GIS staff may be needed to address this significant backlog of work and new data processing needs.

In addition to existing information, new data is also needed in a number of areas to provide plan baseline inventory and resource condition information. New data will include lat/long locations so it can be incorporated into GIS. One study started in the summer of 2003 is land cover inventory and mapping. Additional inventory will need to be completed in 2004, such as VRM, OHV, and ROS. These assessments will be available for use in the planning process. The RMP will likely require the gathering of additional resource data in the future for plan implementation. The costs for collecting data for the plan are shown in Section XII, Budget and in Appendix B Data Status.

VI. Participants in the Process: Roles, Responsibilities, and Authorities

A. Management Team

Henri R. Bisson, State Director, Alaska State Office, Anchorage.

- Approves Draft RMP/EIS before public comment; signs PRMP/FEIS and Record of Decision; provides State Office staff coordination and review; assists in protests; provides some scarce skill specialists for the interdisciplinary team as needed (socio-economics, leasable minerals, writer/editor).

Robert Schneider, Northern Field Office Manager, Fairbanks

- Sets Project Leader and interdisciplinary team priorities, provides overall direction and management guidance to the interdisciplinary team; ensures final product is responsive to the issues and can be implemented; coordinates with upper level management in State of Alaska (DNR and ADF&G), affected Native Corporations, National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; helps develop issues and questions; keeps State Director up-to-date on progress and recommends solutions to keeping progress on track; approves the pre-plan analysis; and recommends draft and final products to State Director.

B. Interdisciplinary and Support Team

EIS/Planning Team Leader – *To be assigned*

- Manages daily operations of KSP RMP planning effort. Provides overall supervision of interdisciplinary team; sets priorities for completing plan, and general oversight of KSP RMP plan preparation details. Prepares and executes KSP RMP planning budget. Serves as point person in the public participation process. With the BLM Field Office Manager, ensure that management of lands and resources along agency administrative boundaries is arrived at in a collaborative manner to avoid different approaches and confusing direction in these areas. Responsible for day-to-day tasks that result in progress toward completion of the plan. Ensures public involvement, coordinates with contractors, and does what is necessary to complete the plan in a timely manner.

Interdisciplinary Team

- Boyce Bush, Realty specialist, NFO: lands and access
- Jeanie Cole, Wildlife biologist, NFO: wildlife, T&E wildlife
- Jim Deininger, geologist, NFO: locatable and saleable minerals
- Randy Meyers, NRS, NFO: vegetation, livestock grazing, forestry, T&E plants
- Dave Parker, Fisheries Biologist, NFO: fisheries, T&E fish
- Howard Smith, Archeologist, NFO: Cultural and paleontological
- Skip Theisen, FMO, NFO: Fire Management
- Tom Sparks, NFO: Recreation, OHV
- Lon Kelly, Outdoor Rec. Planner, NFO: Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Cal Westcott, Outdoor Rec. Planner, NFO: Visual Resource Management
- Stacie McIntosh, Anthropologist, NFO: Subsistence/Section 810
- Soil, water and air: *To be assigned*
- Beth Maclean, Geologist, AK-941: Leasable energy minerals
- Special Designations (ACEC): *to be assigned*

Support Team

- Linda Helfrick, Administrative Assistant
- Shawn Servoss, GIS Specialist, NFO: GIS support
- Craig McCaa, Writer-Editor, NFO: Public Affairs
- Socio-economics: AK-931, *To be assigned*
- Section 7 consultation: *to be assigned if needed* (no listed species)
- Writer-editor: *to be assigned*
- Web support: *To be assigned if needed*
- Arctic Team reviewers: Since the Planning Area encompasses lands within the area managed by the Arctic Geographic Team some review and input will be needed from the Arctic Team Resource Specialists.
- ECO position for GIS support:

C. Scarce Skills

Several of the skills needed to complete the RMP are either not available from existing NFO staff or are in short supply. Support will be needed from the Alaska State Office to fill some of these skills, including Socio-Economics analysis (AK-931) and consideration of leasable minerals (AK-940). There is a writer-editor on staff at NFO. However, this person is currently acting as the Public Affairs Specialist and would not be available to do both. Soil, water and air are not anticipated to be major issues for this planning effort. NFO has a vacant hydrologist/NRS/Physical scientist position that may need to be filled should substantial SWA support be required to complete this plan. If filling the vacant position is not an option, an NFO hydrologist or NRS will be assigned to work on the plan. This may affect other SWA workload within the NFO.

Adequate support by IRM and GIS will be crucial to completing the plan as scheduled. Current NFO IRM and GIS staff will be stretched to the limit with three concurrent planning efforts at NFO (KSP RMP, NE NPR-A, and South NPR-A). Unless the maps for these other plans are contracted, additional GIS support will be needed. An ECO position may be filled to assist in GIS support for the plan.

The following positions may need to be provided by the Alaska State Office, contract or new hire.

- Writer-editor
- Socio-economics
- Hydrology
- Web support
- GIS support

VII. Format and Process for the Plan

A. Process

The outline for the RMP is from the BLM NEPA guidance and planning manuals and handbooks. All legal and policy requirements will be met in the plan and in the process regarding public notices, required elements, distribution of draft and final documents, and specific laws. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality guidelines (CEQ) will be met. The draft and final EIS will be published with the draft and final versions of the RMP.

Public comments will be analyzed after a ninety (90) day review period for the draft RMP and EIS. All comments will be considered before the final RMP and EIS, and Record of Decision are published.

B. Alternative Formulation

A range of alternatives, including a no-action alternative, will be developed to respond to issues. Each alternative will provide different solutions to the issues and concerns. The objective in alternative formulation will be to develop realistic, practical solutions. Some alternatives may be considered but eliminated from detailed study within the RMP/EIS.

C. Internal Review of the Plan

The internal review of the EIS and Plan will take place at the BLM NFO and BLM Alaska State Office.

D. Form of Input from ID Team and Reviewers

Team members and internal reviewers will use Microsoft Word software. Input will also be provided through e-mail, verbally, on flip charts, and through notes taken at meetings. The NFO will request written submission in a specific format but reviewers from outside BLM may use any media they prefer.

E. Accountability

Individuals working on the plan are accountable for completing their specific tasks on time. The planning team leader will keep management aware of the planning process, and will coordinate with team members and reviewers to assure a smooth progression of the project. Any situations that arise in which a delay could occur will be brought to the attention of the team leader so that management can be advised and a strategy developed. Data Stewards are responsible for ensuring that data layers for their resource meet required data standards. A list of the Data Stewards is available on the Alaska BLM intranet website.

VIII. Plan Preparation Schedule

The proposed schedule for the planning process is shown in Table 2. The schedule is based on estimates for the various planning components and may change.

Table 2: Plan Schedule

Planning Phase	Actions	Dates
Initiate planning effort/scoping	Publish NOI	Jan 2004
	Public scoping meetings	Jan – March 2004
	Scoping period ends	March 2004
	Issue scoping report/planning criteria	May 1, 2004
Inventory and data collection	Gather and analyze new data	June 2003 – Oct 2004
	GIS data collection and cleanup	Oct 2003 – Dec 2004
	Data assessment and summary	Oct 2003 – Dec 2004
Formulate alternatives	Formulate alternatives	Jan – March 2005
Write EIS/RMP	Write DEIS/RMP	Jan – July 2005
	Submit DEIS/RMP to SO and WO for review	Aug 2005
	Publish NOA for DEIS/RMP	Oct 2005
	Public review of DEIS/RMP	Oct – Dec 2005
	Public comment period ends	Jan 1, 2005
	Analyze and prepare response to comments	Jan 2005 – March 2006
Final EIS/Record of Decision	Submit FEIS/proposed RMP to WO/DOI	June 1, 2006
	NOA for FEIS/proposed RMP published	July 15, 2006
	Governor's Consistency Review begins	July 15, 2006
	30-day Protest Period ends	August 15, 2006
	Issue Record of Decision	September 30, 2006

IX. Public Participation Plan

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A. Goals and Objectives

The goal is to develop a well-balanced Resource Management Plan in part by soliciting input from the general public, tribes, industry, and other affected interests. Objectives of public participation are to:

- Assure meaningful public involvement throughout the planning process.
- Provide several opportunities for public input during the planning process.
- Develop an interactive website to provide information and solicit comments from all users and interested publics.

- Obtain all available data or information pertinent to the planning effort.
- To the extent possible, ensure consistency with plans of other federal and state agencies, and local governments.
- Coordinate management across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Provide opportunities for involvement of minority populations, low-income communities, and Tribes in the planning process.

B. Opportunities for Public Input

There are several opportunities for public participation during the major stages of the planning process as discussed below. A tentative schedule is shown in Table 2: Plan Schedule. Definitive dates for these events will be published later on the website and/or through Federal Register notices.

1. Identify Issues, Planning Criteria, and Management Concerns

- Information regarding the preparation and content of the plan, as well as announcements of upcoming scoping meetings, will be provided to the public through the Federal Register Notice of Intent, media outreach (radio, newspaper, text TV), and website information. E-mail messages and letters will be sent to people on the mailing list (an initial mailing list will be developed from the Alaska State Office database and expanded during scoping).
- Scoping meetings will be used to gather public input on issues, management concerns, and planning criteria. Proposed locations for these meetings are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nome, Kotzebue, Kiana, Kivalina, Buckland, and Koyuk. Public meetings will consist of a presentation to explain the land use planning process, followed by an opportunity for the public to express issues and concerns. Written comments will be gathered throughout the scoping period. A scoping report may also be made available to the public after the scoping period ends. Proposed planning criteria will be made available for public comment prior to being approved by the field Office Manager.

2. Formulate Alternatives

- Facilitated public meetings may be held to discuss alternatives and ensure that issues are addressed. If public participation is poor at any of the public meetings during the scoping phase, a formal meeting may not be held at that location during this phase. Instead, personal contacts could be made to those who participated. Letters and information on the website will provide background information on issues and alternatives.

3. Issue the Draft Plan/EIS

- A Public Notice will be published in the Federal Register announcing the availability of the draft RMP/EIS. The notice will state that there is a 90-day period for public to submit comments. A schedule of public meetings to be held during the comment period will also be disseminated to local communities via newspaper articles and/or display ads, posters, or flyers. This information will also be available on the NFO website.

- Public meetings will be held locally during the 90-day public comment period to gather verbal or written input on the draft plan/EIS.

4. Publish the Proposed Plan/Final EIS

- The proposed plan/final EIS will be sent to those on the mailing list as well as to all those that participate in the planning process during the preparation of the plan; the availability of the plan will be advertised in regional newspapers and other media. Public outreach materials will include a notice of the 30-day protest period.
- Solicit Governor's consistency review (60 days).
- Coastal Zone Management Review (90 days).
- Informal public input, provided in written, verbal, and e-mail form, will be welcomed anytime in the process, and is to be documented and routed to the BLM Field Office Manager in Fairbanks, then to the Team Leader.

5. Respond to Protests

- Written responses will be sent to the public as needed.
- A Federal Register Notice will be published requesting comments on significant changes made as a result of a protest. This will be advertised and the information made available on the NFO website.

6. Publish Approved Plan

- Notify publics via news articles, e-mail, website, and transmittal letters of availability of the approved Plan.

C. Interested and Affected Publics

Major groups of stakeholders, representing publics known to be interested or affected, have been identified and are listed below. Additional stakeholders will be identified throughout the process. A mailing list identifying key people in these organizations, agencies, and interest groups will be compiled. The Team Leader, Public Affairs Specialist, and Administrative Assistant will be responsible for handling all mailings, and notifications of public meetings, input deadlines, etc., associated with the public participation process.

Special Interest Groups: These groups may provide additional data and will represent many of the users of BLM lands. Opportunities for input from these groups include scoping, at public meetings, and during the public comment period. ID team members may make presentations to these groups upon request. ID team members may coordinate directly with these groups during development of the plan.

Alaska Miners Association
Climbing Groups
Search/Rescue groups
Fairbanks Paddlers
Flycasters and other fishing groups
Kawerak Incorporated (Nome)
Maniilaq Association (Kotzebue)
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Norton Sound Regional Economic Development Corporation (Nome)

Outdoor Council
Trappers Association
Neighborhood Mine Watch
Western Arctic Caribou Working Group
Subsistence Users

Federal and State Government Agencies: These agencies will provide additional data needed for planning. Their input will be needed to ensure coordination across land management boundaries and consistency with other plans. They will have opportunities to provide input during the scoping period, during development of the alternatives, at public meetings, and during the public comment period. ID team members will coordinate directly with their counterparts at these agencies during development of the RMP.

State of Alaska, ADF&G and DNR
National Park Service, Western Arctic Parklands (WEAR)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Selawik NWR and Maritime NWR
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management
Alaska State Historic Preservation Office
NW Arctic Borough
North Slope Borough
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

Adjacent Land Owners/Managers: Adjacent landowners will be informed of the ongoing planning process to ensure coordination across land management boundaries and consistency with other plans. Opportunities for input will be provided during the scoping period, at public meetings, and during the public comment period.

Village and Regional Corporations
State of Alaska
Above federal agencies

Government-to-Government Consultation: Federally recognized Tribes have a special, unique legal and political relationship with the Government of the United States as defined by the U.S. Constitution, treaties, statutes, court decisions, and executive orders. These definitive authorities also serve as the basis for the Federal Government's obligation to acknowledge the status of federally recognized Tribes in Alaska. As such, it is the policy of the Bureau of Land Management to formally consult with federally recognized Tribes in Alaska prior to taking action or undertaking activities that will have a substantial, direct effect on the tribes, their assets, rights, services, or programs. To this end, consultation will occur with federally recognized traditional governments during the planning process, in order to identify and consider their concerns with regard to all BLM resource management programs. This consultation will provide additional data needed for planning. It will provide input from Native Alaskans and Tribes. These groups may provide additional data on Traditional Cultural Properties and subsistence uses in the Planning Area. Their input will be needed to ensure consistency with tribal plans and across jurisdictional boundaries.

Native Village Tribal Councils within the Planning Area

Community Participation: Individuals from these and other communities within the Planning Area will provide a broad spectrum of input into the plan. They may provide additional data needed for planning purposes. Native Villages may provide additional data on Traditional Cultural Properties and subsistence uses. Opportunities for their participation will be provided at scoping meetings, public meetings, and/or during the public comment period.

Anchorage
Buckland
Fairbanks
Kiana
Kivalina
Kotzebue
Koyuk
Nome

Resource Advisory Councils and Regional Advisory Councils: The Regional Advisory Councils include representation from Native Villages across the region and will provide a forum for input from local residents and Native Alaskans, particularly regarding subsistence use. The BLM Alaska Resource Advisory Council will provide a broad spectrum of input from various interests. Opportunities for input will be provided during the scoping period, at RAC meetings, and during the public comment period. ID team members may make presentations to these groups at their request.

Alaska Resource Advisory Council
Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council
Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council
North Slope Regional Advisory Council

National, State and local elected officials: These individuals need to be kept informed of the ongoing planning process to ensure consistency with other plans. Opportunities for input will be provided during the scoping period, at public meetings, during the public comment period, and during the Governor's consistency review.

Interested businesses and consultants: These groups need to be kept informed of the ongoing planning process so they can protect their business interests. They will provide input to the plan for commercial users and industry. They may provide additional data for planning purposes. Opportunities for input will be provided during the scoping period, at public meetings, and during the public comment period. ID Team members may coordinate directly with these businesses during development of the plan.

Cominco Alaska, Red Dog Operations
Commercial guides, outfitters, and transporters
Reindeer Herders Association

Media: The media will be essential for public notification of upcoming meetings and planning deadlines. There may be opportunities to disseminate additional information to the public about the plan through the media.

KNOM (Nome)
KICY (Nome)
KOTZ (Kotzebue)
Anchorage Daily News
Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Arctic Sounder
Nome Nugget
Text television where available

Potential Cooperating Agencies: Some agencies operating within the Planning Area may be interested in becoming Cooperating Agencies on the RMP. The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources entered into an Assignment Agreement (Title 4 of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IAP) of 1970, 5 USC 3371) with BLM on June 6, 2002. This agreement authorizes BLM payment of services for one State Planner to provide State information throughout the planning process. The current agreement ends December 31, 2005 and may be extended.

State of Alaska
Northwest Arctic Borough
North Slope Borough

D. Internet Technology

An interactive web site will be developed to provide information and solicit comments from all users and interested publics. This site will be linked to the Alaska BLM and the NFO external webpages. It will follow the website format used for other ongoing planning efforts in Alaska. It may be maintained internally by BLM or be contracted. The site will be updated periodically to ensure currency with the planning effort. The planning schedule will be posted on this site. Planning documents such as the planning criteria, NOI, Scoping report, and draft RMP/EIS, will be placed on the web site as they are completed. The site will provide for e-mail response from the public.

E. Incorporation of public input into the RMP and Record of Decision

A Scoping Report will be written after the scoping period ends. Public input and additional data gathered during the scoping period will be used to develop the draft RMP/EIS. If issues identified during the scoping period are within the scope of the plan, they will be addressed during development of the alternatives. Comments received on the draft RMP/EIS will be considered during formulation of the preferred alternative. The ID team will respond to substantive comments and any new information pertinent to the plan will be incorporated into the Proposed RMP/FEIS. Any protests received will be responded to. If protests result in any significant changes a Federal Register Notice will be published requesting additional comments.

F. Economic Profile System

In accordance with WO IM No. 2003-169, the Economic Profile System or an equivalent will be used as a tool for characterizing socio-economic baseline conditions during the planning process. Interested community leaders in Nome and Kotzebue will be invited to review and discuss social and economic data and sources for the planning area. BLM will host at least two workshops or work sessions to accomplish this task. Additional communities may be involved as requested.

X. Staff, Office Space and Equipment Needs

At this time a Team Lead has not been identified. A term position will be advertised for the Team Lead. Other scarce skills that may need to be contracted or filled with existing NFO or AKSO personnel are writer-editor, Socio-economics, additional GIS support, and soil, water and air.

Office space is available in the NFO building in Fairbanks and the field offices in Kotzebue and Nome.

Computer hardware and software purchases may be required.

XI. Budget

Three tables contained in Appendix A present the fiscal year 2003-2006 budget projections for the Plan. Table 1 shows cost to the planning program (1610) by fiscal year. Table 2 displays project cost to each supporting subactivity for the project term. Table 3 summarizes the total budget for the life of the project. Numbers displayed represent thousands of dollars. Work month costs are based on average work month costs by subactivity. Budget proposals in BPS related to the RMP include: BPS# 15467, BPS# 22468, BPS# 22685, BPS# 8048.

XII. Appendix A: Budget Table

Costs by Fiscal Year for 1610 (Costs in $1000 dollars. wm cost based on average 1610 wm) See BPS#22468 Project for leasable minerals and BPS#22685 for socio-economics., and BPS#15467 for Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP.					
Description	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Preparation Plan	$8.6 (1 wm)				$8.6
Publish NOI		$1.5 (project$)			$1.5
Scoping Meetings		$16.1(1 wm and $7.5 project)			$16.1
Scoping Report		$9.6 (1 wm and $1 project)			$9.6
Draft RMP/EIS		$103.2 (12 wms)	$325 (35 wms and $10 project)		$428
Public Meetings				$10 (project)	$10
Proposed RMP/FEIS				$325 (35 wms and $10 project)	$325
Travel		$25 (project)	$25 (project)	$25 (project)	$75
Data analysis					
Natural Heritage DB		$5 (project)			$5
minerals		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
lands		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
recreation		$30.6 (1 wm and $22 project)			$30.6
VRM		$24.6 (1 wm and $16 project)			$24.6
River Protection		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
ACEC		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
Cultural/Paleontology		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
Special status species		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
Fisheries		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
Vegetation		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
Wildlife		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
Fire		$8.6 (1 wm)			$8.6
GIS support		$63 (5 wms and $20 project)	(5 wms under DRMP/FEIS)	(5 wms under PRMP/FEIS)	$63
Socio-economics		$17.2 (project #22685)	$17.2 (project)	17.2 (2 base wms)*	$34.4
Public Affairs		$1.5 (project)	$2.5 (project)	$2.5 (project)	$6.5
Support Services (0777)		$39 (project)	$39 (project)	$39 (project)	$117
TOTAL	$8.6	422.3	$408.7	$401.5	$1239.6

*Base work month cost not included in total for FY06

Description	**Costs by Fiscal Year for other subactivities** (Costs in $1000 dollars. Work month cost based on average wm cost rounded to nearest $1000)				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Range 1020		$12 (1.5 wm)			$12
Forestry 1030		$6 (0.5 wm, $2 project)			$6
Riparian 1040	$20 (project)				$20
Cultural 1050		$22 (1 wm, $15 project)			$22
Wildlife 1110	$43 (1 wm, $35 project)	$16 (2 wm)			$59
Fisheries 1120	$62 (1 wm; $55 project)	$34 (2 wms, $20 project)	$12 (1 wm, $5 project)	$12 (1 wm, $5 project)	$120
Recreation 1220		$15 (2 wms)	$7.5 (1 wm)		$22.5
Leasable minerals 1310		$16 (2 wms) BPS #22468	$16 (2 wms)		$32
Salable minerals 1330		$8 (1 wm)			$8
Lands 1410		$14 (2 wms)			$14
Locatable Minerals 1990		$14 (2 wms)			$14
Fire 2823		$90 (12 wms and $28 project)	$90 (12 wms and $28 project)		$180
TOTAL	$125	$247	$125.5	$12	$509.50

XIII. Appendix B: Data Status Table